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FM AMEMBASSY TBILISI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2739
INFO RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU 2077
RUEHYE/AMEMBASSY YEREVAN 2438

UNCLAS TBILISI 000082

DEPT FOR EUR/CARC, EEB/CBA - Dennis Winstead

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL ECON EAIR ECIN RR GG

SUBJECT: EMBASSY TBILISI BFIF PROPOSAL FOR 2010

1.(U) Embassy Tbilisi would like to propose two projects for BFIF funding in 2010. The first is for a Caucasus-wide commercial conference that will help develop region-wide investment concepts for key industries in the region in order to attract greater U.S. business interest. This would be a public/private partnership and include representatives of the American Chamber of Commerce in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. This proposal is coordinated with Embassy Baku and Embassy Yerevan, and their respective travel will be covered in their individual BFIF proposals. The second proposal is for economic/ commercial tradecraft training for a new LES Economic and Commercial Assistant to be hired in 2010.

12. (U) CAUCASUS COMMERCIAL COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

a-b) Justification and Impact: In coordination and agreement with Embassies Yerevan and Baku, the Caucasus region proposes a commercial conference to coordinate on export and investment promotion for American companies doing or interested in doing business in the region. Individually, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan are small markets that, despite opportunities, often fall under the radar screen of U.S. companies looking to export or invest overseas. During this two day event, representatives who cover commercial issues from each of the three embassies will meet in Tbilisi together with the Executive Directors or Presidents of their respective American Chambers of Commerce. In advance of this conference, the delegations will coordinate with each other to determine three to four sectors which present outstanding opportunities for U.S. business looking at the larger regional market. This will include background on each relevant sector, which could include transportation and logistics, agro-processing, or real estate and construction to name a few, as well as challenges to market entry, peculiarities of each market, and contact suggestions.

The two-day conference will be an opportunity to combine these post-specific industry sheets into a regional wide marketing tool to attract U.S. business. The resulting documents will be posted on each post's respective website and shared with our Commercial Service colleagues both abroad and in the U.S. This gathering will also allow for greater commercial coordination in the region, both with the private sector and among U.S. representation. It would also be useful to have Washington participation either from the Department of State or the Department of Commerce. This conference could also help foster economic cooperation in the Caucasus writ large.

This conference could also help revitalize the Caucasus region American Chamber of Commerce Alliance, which in the past held annual meetings. The group has not met in more than three years.

Embassies Baku and Yerevan are both supportive and involved in this proposal, and will submit their related costs in their individual BFIF proposals.

c) This conference would be held in April in advance of the planned Georgia Trade Mission and Business Summit that will take place in

Batumi, Georgia. This would allow the documents created to be marketing materials for the larger trade mission.

d) Embassy Baku and Yerevan will separately submit proposals for travel and hotel costs related to this conference. While these costs are presented separately, they are essential for the event. They only include travel expenses for USG employees. All AmCham travel will be funded independently. Embassy Tbilisi estimates conference costs will be USD 3000 for conference space, presentation materials, technology support, and in-Tbilisi transportation costs.

e) Point of contact for Embassy Tbilisi is Erika Olson. Point of contact for Embassy Baku is Selim Ariturk. Point of contact for Embassy Yerevan is Marko Velikonja.

13. (U) ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL TRAINING FOR LES STAFF

a-b) Justification/Impact: In 2010, Post has requested a new economic commercial LES assistant to help fill the need for greater commercial and economic support in the Embassy. While the incumbent will likely come with significant business or economic experience, they will be new to the U.S. government. Sending this employee to FSI to learn commercial and economic tradecraft, as well as to hold consultations with the myriad of U.S. government agencies and associations involved in economic and commercial promotion will prove invaluable. This training will be vital in helping this new employee play an immediate role, especially in the planning and implementation of and follow up to a large trade and investment mission planned in Georgia for May.

c) Milestones: While timing for this course will depend partially on the schedule and availability of courses at FSI, we would propose this training course take place by fall 2010.

d) Estimated Cost:

Plane Ticket to Washington DC: USD 3000
Lodging and Per Diem: USD 1582 (10 days at USD 297)
Total Cost: USD 4582

e) Point of Contact: Erika Olson/ Tom Cumbow

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